

Item
Sumter, SC
Circ. 21837
From Page:
2
4/21/2007
67039

It's a Matter of Balance

Initiative aims to help elderly tackle fear of falling

By **RANDY BURNS**
Item Staff Writer

135

BISHOPVILLE - Lee County residents will have a second opportunity to participate in a training program designed to tackle the leading cause of injury and injury deaths among older adults in South Carolina.

Lee County's Matter of Balance initiative, sponsored by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control; the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging; and the University of South Carolina, Arnold School of Public Health; is designed to help the elderly learn techniques for making their homes more fall-proof and also to provide ways to give them confidence to travel outside the home without fear of falling.

A second round of training programs will get under way soon at four locations in Bishopville: CareSouth Carolina on U.S. 15 South; Lee County Council on Aging on 51 Wilkinson Road; Sandy Grove United Methodist Church at 2870 Sandy Grove Church Road; and Unionville AME Church at 1330 Swimming Pen Road.

The training program began in the fall at the Lee County Council on Aging, Faith Community Center and Ebenezer United

Methodist Church.

The Lee County Parks and Recreation Department is serving as a central point of contact to inform the public of the training opportunity.

"This department is looking for ways to

better serve the county's seniors and this program was a natural fit," said Alan Watkins, recreation director. "We hope to add other programs such as open gym times for walking in the morning that will allow a safe and comfortable environment for seniors and the general public to exercise. We hope to begin this as soon as remodeling in the gym (old Bishopville High School) is completed."

Watkins said the training program consists of nine sessions that are being scheduled by officials at the training sites to accommodate the participants.

Attitudes about falls, the home environment, medications, and safety concerns are addressed in the training program. Easy exercises are included in the program to improve balance and mobility. Participants are encouraged to practice the exercises at home to maintain the benefits of the program. After they complete the program, they will be given information about walking trails, the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program, and other resources in Lee County to help them stay active.

"Falls are the major cause of injury and death for seniors over the age of 65," Watkins said. "Many seniors become shut-ins from a fear of falling when out of the home. Short trips to the grocery store or pharmacy, which are very important and necessary, can become a traumatic experience because of this fear of falling."

Watkins said anyone interested in participating in the training should contact officials at the training sites.





Item
Sumter,SC
Circ. 21837
From Page:
2
4/21/2007
67039



SPRING TRAINING SITES

Lee County Council on Aging
51 Wilkinson Road
Contact: William Frierson
(803) 484-6212

Sandy Grove United Methodist Church
2870 Sandy Grove Church Rd
Contact Inez Lee
(843) 326-7137

CareSouth Carolina
U.S. 15 South
Contact: Latoya Robinson
(803) 484-5317

Unionville AME Church
1330 Swimming Pen Rd
Contact: Betty Watkins
(803) 469-0331